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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 001002

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B.WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/06/2018
TAGS: PGOV PREL ASEC PHUM ZI
SUBJECT: WELSHMAN NCUBE ON THE STATE OF PLAY

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) According to MDC-Mutambara (MDC-M) secretary general and negotiator Welshman Ncube, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) president Morgan Tsvangirai are supposed to meet tomorrow in Harare to discuss resolution of the political impasse. According to Ncube, Tsvangirai has been pressured by hardliners in his party to demand renegotiation on the allocation of all ministries and to seek agreement on other issues such as allocation of governors, Amendment 19, and ambassadorial appointments. Nevertheless, Tsvangirai has previously indicated he is willing put these issues aside for the time being and sign an agreement if he is satisfied as to the disposition of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Home Affairs will presumably be the focus of a Mugabe Tsvangirai meeting if it takes place. Mugabe has previously argued to SADC facilitator Thabo Mbeki and to the SADC Troika that the MDC should not have exclusive control of Home Affairs because it is operating paramilitary training bases outside of Zimbabwe. END SUMMARY.

Mugabe-Tsvangirai Meeting and Extraordinary Summit

¶2. (C) Ncube told polecon chief November 6 that Tsvangirai had met with Mbeki three days ago in South Africa and requested a private meeting with Mugabe. Mbeki dispatched Sidney Mufamadi to Harare to present the request to Mugabe. Mugabe discussed it with several ZANU-PF insiders, including Patrick Chinamasa, Emmerson Mnangagwa, Joseph Msika, and Nicholas Goche. According to Ncube, all except Goche opposed the idea. Nevertheless, Mugabe decided to go forward with a meeting which is due to take place tomorrow in Harare.
(Comment: We will be surprised if a meeting comes off. Among other considerations, it would require Tsvangirai to return to Zimbabwe and then leave again for the November 9

Summit. End Comment.)

13. (C) Ncube opined that those opposed to the meeting are trying to scuttle an agreement; they are concerned that a deal will result for them in loss of power and patronage. Mugabe, on the other hand, wants a deal because his position is secure under an agreement, and he realizes the country is now at a dead end.

14. (C) Ncube, who supports an agreement, said he would be very surprised if the SADC Extraordinary Summit on November 9 accomplished anything since hardliners of each party would be present and would support their own agendas. He thought the only possibility of an agreement was direct Mugabe-Tsvangirai negotiations.

SADC Troika Negotiations

15. (C) Ncube, who was present at the SADC Troika meeting in Harare on October 27 and 28, said Tsvangirai initially told the Troika that crucial issues to be resolved were an equitable distribution of ministries, division of governorships, and drafting of Amendment 19 to encapsulate any agreement, Mugabe said the only outstanding issue was control of Home Affairs.

16. (C) According to Ncube the Troika met privately with Tsvangirai to discuss governors and Amendment 19. Tsvangirai

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agreed that, since governors are not part of cabinet, that issue could be postponed until after the formation of a government. Similarly, Tsvangirai agreed that Amendment 19 should be resolved by the new cabinet. (Note: Ncube said that the procedure agreed to by the parties before the September 15 signing of the agreement was for the Attorney General to draft an amendment that would then be discussed and ultimately adopted by the cabinet. End Note.) Tsvangirai then told the Troika he would sign an agreement if the MDC received control of Home Affairs and Finance.

17. (C) Ncube related that the Troika then met privately with Mugabe to discuss Home Affairs and Finance. Mugabe said he had already agreed to give Finance to the MDC. He refused, however, to give up Home Affairs.

18. (C) Ncube told us that a round of discussions then began on control of Home Affairs with Mugabe agreeing to co-ministers and Tsvangirai suggesting the Home Affairs minister be rotated between the parties. Both Mugabe and Tsvangirai finally agreed to rotational control, but they could not agree on which party would have the first rotation. It was that disagreement, said Ncube, that prevented a final resolution.

Hawks in Both Parties

19. (C) The SADC communique of October 28 noted only that there was disagreement with regard to Home Affairs. Ncube averred that this was a correct statement of the state of negotiations.

110. (C) On October 30, MDC-T secretary general and negotiator Tendai Biti wrote the SADC Executive Secretary and asserted that there were five outstanding issues: equitable allocation of all ministries, division of governorships, composition of the National Security Council, appointment of ambassadors and permanent secretaries, and Amendment 19. Ncube said this letter was contrary to the position taken by Tsvangirai in the Troika negotiations and represented an attempt by Biti (and other hardliners such as MDC spokesperson Nelson Chamisa), who did not want an agreement,

to scuttle the negotiations.

¶11. (C) Ncube told us he believes both Mugabe and Tsvangirai want an agreement, and he himself said an agreement was the only possible way out of the disastrous economic and humanitarian situation. But he believed hawks in each party, for their own reasons, would do everything possible to subvert a deal.

Allegations of MDC Paramilitary Camps

¶12. (C) Ncube told us that MDC-M president and negotiator Arthur Mutambara argued to Mbeki and the Troika that MDC-T should receive Home Affairs. Mbeki responded that Mugabe would not give up completely Home Affairs because he believed the MDC was operating paramilitary training camps in Botswana and South Africa. (Note: A November 5 article in The Herald entitled "The Savimbi facto: Plot thickens" alleged an MDC plot to use force to remove Mugabe and said that a report was presented to the SADC Troika accusing Tsvangirai of either directly facilitating or allowing people close to him to facilitate the training of militias in a neighboring country." The article also said Mubabe's position was that Home Affairs should not be entrusted "to people who could be training a militia."

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¶13. (C) We asked Ncube whether he believed that MDC-T had established paramilitary camps. He said he had no knowledge. He also said that in February Mbeki confronted Biti and fellow negotiator Elton Mangoma with reports that MDC-T was sponsoring youth training camps in South Africa. Biti and Mangoma did not deny the allegations; they said it was possible that members of Tsvangirai's kitchen cabinet such as Ian Makone could be responsible.

COMMENT

¶14. (C) It is unlikely the November 9 Summit will discuss issues other than Home Affairs. If there is an overall agreement, then, it is likely to rest on resolution of the Home Affairs issue only. Tsvangirai's position is unclear. He has given indications during the course of the negotiations that Home Affairs is the sine qua non of an agreement. More recently, pressured by Biti, he has stated there needs to be renegotiation on all ministries. If he takes the latter position, SADC will in all likelihood once again declare a stalemate on Sunday.

¶15. (C) There appears to be a difference in philosophy between Tsvangirai and others such as Biti. Tsvangirai tends to believe that a power-sharing government, even if imperfect, has the potential to work and address Zimbabwe's pressing problems. Biti believes that it cannot work and would prefer to end the process now. With an agreement on new elections unlikely, nobody, including Biti, has a workable alternative to a power-sharing government.

¶16. (C) We have seen no credible evidence that the MDC is operating paramilitary camps outside of Zimbabwe. Whether or not this is true, and whether or not ZANU-PF actually believes reports of MDC camps, it is using the issue to avoid giving up Home Affairs.

MCGEE